

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1           1.     A system comprising:  
2                     at least one serving dish configured to support food;  
3                     a power source which comprises at least one portable electrical power  
4     generating device, the power source providing power to heat the food.
- 1           2.     The system of claim 1, wherein the power source comprises at least  
2     one of a battery and a fuel cell.
- 1           3.     The system of claim 1, comprising at least one heating element  
2     configured to heat the food, the heating element being powered using the power  
3     source.
- 1           4.     The system of claim 1, comprising a serving cart which is configured  
2     to hold the serving dish and the power source.
- 1           5.     The system of claim 1, comprising a counter on which the serving dish  
2     is placed, wherein the power source provides power to heat the counter and the heat  
3     from the counter is transferred to the serving dish.
- 1           6.     The system of claim 1, wherein the food in the serving dish is heated to  
2     at least approximately 140° F.
- 1           7.     The system of claim 1, wherein the serving dish is configured to fit  
2     within a holder, the holder comprising water heated using power from the power  
3     source.
- 1           8.     A system comprising:  
2                     a counter;  
3                     at least one heating element in thermal communication with the  
4     counter; and  
5                     a power source which comprises a portable electrical power generating  
6     device and which is configured to provide power to the heating element.

1           9.       The system of claim 8, wherein the power source comprises at least  
2       one of a battery and a fuel cell.

1           10.      The system of claim 8, comprising a serving cart which includes the  
2       counter and the power source.

1           11.      The system of claim 8, wherein the counter comprises quartz.

1           12.      The system of claim 8, wherein the heating element is positioned on a  
2       bottom side of the counter.

1           13.      The system of claim 8, wherein the power source is configured to  
2       provide direct current power to the heating element.

1           14.      A system comprising:  
2                   at least one container supporting food;  
3                   at least one heating element which heats the food; and  
4                   at least one fuel cell configured to provide electrical power to the  
5       heating element.

1           15.      The system of claim 14, wherein the container is a serving dish.

1           16.      The system of claim 14, comprising a serving cart configured to hold  
2       the container and the fuel cell.

1           17.      The system of claim 14, wherein the container is a chafing dish.

1           18.      The system of claim 14, comprising a counter configured to support  
2       the container, the heating element being configured to heat the counter.

1           19.      The system of claim 14, wherein the container, heating element, and  
2       fuel cell are portable.

1           20.    A system comprising:  
2                   at least one container supporting food; and  
3                   at least one battery configured to provide power to heat the food in the  
4 container to at least approximately 185° F.

1           21.    The system of claim 20, wherein the battery is configured to provide  
2 power to heat the food in the container to at least approximately 200° F.

1           22.    The system of claim 20, comprising a serving cart which is configured  
2 to hold the container and the battery.

1           23.    A chafing dish which supports food and uses at least one of a battery  
2 and a fuel cell to heat the food.

1           24.    The chafing dish of claim 23, comprising at least one heating element  
2 positioned underneath the chafing dish, the heating element being powered by at least  
3 one of the battery and the fuel cell.

1           25.    The chafing dish of claim 24, wherein the battery or fuel cell is  
2 configured to provide direct current power to the heating element.

1           26.    A chafing dish supporting food and using direct current power to heat  
2 the food.

1           27.    A serving cart comprising:  
2                   a surface;  
3                   at least one heating element which heats the surface; and  
4                   a power source which comprises at least one of a battery and a fuel  
5 cell, the power source being configured to provide power to the heating element.

1           28.    The serving cart of claim 27, wherein the surface comprises quartz.

1           29.    The serving cart of claim 27, wherein the combination of the power  
2 source and the heating element is configured to maintain the surface at a temperature  
3 of at least 140° F for at least 4 hours.

1           30.     A method of serving food comprising:  
2                     positioning a plurality of serving dishes adjacent to one another on a  
3 counter, the serving dishes comprising various types of food; and  
4                     heating food in the plurality of serving dishes using at least one of a  
5 battery and a fuel cell.

1           31.     The method of claim 30, wherein the step of heating food comprises  
2 using the battery or fuel cell to heat the counter which transfers the heat to the serving  
3 dishes and the food.

1           32.     The method of claim 30, wherein the counter comprises quartz.

1           33.     The method of claim 30, wherein the positioning step comprises  
2 positioning the plurality of serving dishes on a serving cart.

1           34.     A system comprising:  
2                     a counter which comprises quartz;  
3                     at least one heating element in thermal communication with the  
4 counter; and  
5                     a power source which provides power to the heating element.

1           35.     The system of claim 34, wherein the counter comprises at least  
2 approximately 80 wt.% quartz.

1           36.     The system of claim 35, wherein the counter comprises at least  
2 approximately 2 wt.% organic resin.

1           37.     The system of claim 34, wherein the heating element is enclosed by  
2 counter.

1           38.    A system comprising:  
2                   at least one container supporting food;  
3                   at least one heating element which heats the food; and  
4                   at least one photovoltaic cell configured to provide electrical power to  
5 the heating element.

1           39.    The system of claim 38, comprising a serving cart configured to hold  
2 the container and the photovoltaic cell.

1           40.    The system of claim 38, wherein the container is a chafing dish.

1           41.    The system of claim 38, comprising a counter configured to support  
2 the container, the heating element being configured to heat the counter.

1           42.    The system of claim 38, wherein the container, heating element, and  
2 photovoltaic cell are portable.